

On page 18, please delete the paragraph at lines 2-8 and replace it with the following paragraph:

a Figure 1A is a schematic representation of the nucleotide sequence (SEQ ID NO: 1) and corresponding amino acid sequence of rat osteoactivin and its predicted amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO: 2) (beginning with the methionine at nucleotide 115) shown in single letter format below the DNA sequence. Solid black lines between nucleotides 217 to 267 and 1768 to 1818 underline the peptides to which the antisera were raised for immunohistochemical localization and Western blot analysis of osteoactivin expression.

On page 18, please delete the paragraphs at lines 13-17 and replace them with the following paragraphs:

*a*² Figure 2A is a schematic representation of the alignments of the open reading frame nucleotide sequences of rat osteoactivin (SEQ ID NO: 1), mouse *nmb* (SEQ ID NO: 7, and human *nmb* (SEQ ID NO: 8).

*a*² Figure 2B is a schematic representation of the alignment of the predicted amino acid sequences of rat osteoactivin (SEQ ID NO:2), mouse *nmb* (SEQ ID NO: 5) and human *nmb* (SEQ ID NO: 6).

On page 46, please delete the paragraph at lines 3-9 and replace it with the following paragraph:

*a*³ In Figures 2A and 2B, the nucleotide (SEQ ID NOS: 1, 7, and 8) and predicted amino acid sequences (SEQ ID NOS: 2, 5, and 6) respectively, of rat osteoactivin and human and mouse *nmb* were compared. Figure 2A reveals that there is a 76% sequence identity in the nucleotide sequences between rat and human. The predicted protein sequence of rat osteoactivin has a proline serine-rich 14 amino acid insertion beginning at residue 333 that is not present in the